

January 22, 2026

At the Special Called meeting of the Mayor and Board of Aldermen/women of the Town of Canton held at the Town Hall at 85 Summer Street, January 7, 2026, at 6:00pm with Mayor Zeb Smathers, and Aldermen/women Mull, Proctor and Alderman Hamlett, and Shepard were present.

Alderwoman Proctor arrived at 6:56p.m.

A. Call to Order

Mayor Smathers called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

B. Roll Call

Mayor Smathers stated that Manager Stinnett, Clerk Dunbar, and Attorney Morgan were present. Assistant Manager Walker was absent.

C. Pledge/Invocation

Representative Mark Pless led those in attendance in reciting the pledge of allegiance.

D. Approval of Minutes

Alderwoman Mull made a motion to approve January 7, 2025, minutes as presented. Alderman Shepard seconded the motion. All were in favor of the motion and the motion carried.

E. Mayor Comments

Mayor Smathers asked Manager Stinnett about the plans for the upcoming winter storm. Manager Stinnett ensured Mayor Smathers that we are as prepared as we can be. Mayor Smathers stated that he will call Eric Spirtas to ask if the wastewater treatment plant is ready for the storm.

Mayor Smathers stated that he met with Robin Ramsey from Senator Tom Tillis' office this afternoon at 5pm. Mayor Smathers continued by stating that a \$5.5 million bill for the new Canton Fire department passed in the United States House of Representatives, and it is now up to the Senate to pass. Mayor Smathers stated that this is a tremendous amount of good news for the Town of Canton.

Mayor Smathers stated that he will let our friends from FEMA know that we are still displaced from Town Hall and the Police Department. Mayor Smathers stated that our people deserve better, as these trailers date back to Tropical Storm Fred, in August 2021.

F. Alderman/Alderwoman Comments

Alderwoman Mull thanked everyone for coming to the meeting.

Alderman Hamlett asked Chief Sluder about the worst-case scenario for senior citizens facing the upcoming ice storm and predicted freezing temperatures as far as sheltering them from the cold.

Chief Sluder stated that there is an emergency management service meeting tomorrow to discuss the county's emergency shelter.

Alderman Hamlett stated that NCDOT reported that it is dangerous for students, faculty, staff and parents walking on Black Bear Drive and Pisgah School Road before and after school. Alderman Hamlett stated that the Metropolitan Planning Organization signed a letter of support for a proposed safety plan for a sidewalk to help with foot traffic and safer access for students. Alderman Hamlett continued by stating that the proposed project will cost around \$400,000 if it is approved by the NCDOT.

Alderman Shepard stated that Pisgah High School got a new score board for the baseball team, and it is high enough out of the flood zone. Alderman Shepard asked residents to stay inside this weekend, unless it is an emergency, and to stay safe.

G. Public Comments:

No Public Comments

H. Managers Reports

Manager Stinnett made the Board aware of the McGill and Associates task order for flood and FEMA purposes, she reminded the Board that it was in the amount of \$60,000. Manager Stinnett stated that hopefully this will be the last task order, but it is possible that there could be one more.

Manager Stinnett stated that the County has issued a state of emergency. Manager Stinnett asked if the Board wants to issue a State of Emergency for Canton.

Alderman Hamlett made a motion to declare a State of Emergency for the Town of Canton. Alderwoman Mull seconded the motion. All voted in favor of the motion and the motion carried.

I. Old Business

New Business

1. Haywood Christian Ministry's Presentation

Blake Hart from Haywood Christian Ministry's gave a presentation on what the organization has accomplished and their future plans, the group is focusing on hunger and making sure residents have the resources they need to survive.

Mayor Smathers stated that he was blown away by the food pantry facility that is located in Bethel and he was impressed by how many people it serves. Mayor Smathers stated that one of the biggest threats to Western North Carolina is affordability and he is proud of Haywood Christian Ministry's for doing their part.

Alderwoman Mull thanked Mr. Hart and the organization for stocking the food pantry at her church. Alderwoman Mull continued by saying that the food pantry is heavily used.

The Board thanked Mr. Hart for his work and for presenting.

Alderman Hamlett stated that the group is doing what everyone should be doing. Alderman Hamlett said that he appreciates Mr. Hart and the Haywood Christian Ministries.

2. Southern Group Presentation

Jason Saine with The Southern Group spoke to the Board about Gentiva, a hospice care facility that is wanting to set up a facility in Haywood County. Mr. Saine then introduced Susan and Heather from Gentiva and they gave a presentation about the company.

Susan stated that the goal for Gentiva is to meet the unmet need for hospice care in Haywood County. Susan stated that Gentiva wants to establish a facility in Haywood County, so residents do not have to travel far for Hospice care. Susan asked the Board for their support if they are awarded the contract.

Heather thanked the Board for giving them the opportunity to present information on Gentiva. Heather spoke about the groups who have signed a letter of support for Gentiva and then asked the Board if they would sign the letter of support so they can give it to the State.

Mayor Smathers stated that this community is grateful for Mr. Saine and for Representative Pless for their combined effort in keeping North Carolina safe and the other benefits we have gained from their work in the General Assembly. Mayor Smathers stated that the Board will review the letter of support and get back with Gentiva.

Alderman Hamlett told a story about his mother while he was looking for hospice care, and he they had to go to Asheville because it was the closest facility around. Alderman Hamlett stated that it is difficult to move a loved one and then be present with a family at home. Alderman Hamlett then thanked, Susan, Heather, and Mr. Saine for their work and presenting to the Board.

Mayor Smathers stated that he would put this community up against any other community in North Carolina.

3. Big Brother Big Sister Sponsorship

Clerk Dunbar presented to the Board a sponsorship request from Big Brother Big Sister. Clerk Dunbar continued saying that the group is doing a fundraiser called Bowling for Kids' Sake at different bowling alleys in Western North Carolina.

Alderwoman Mull made a motion to donate \$150 to Big Brothers Big Sisters. Alderman Hamlett seconded the motion. All voted in favor of the motion and the motion carried.

Alderman Shepard stated that the group does a lot for the Western North Carolina community. Alderman Shepard then said that Big Brothers Big Sisters were very active after Hurricane Helene.

4. Battle of the Bands: Special Event Application

Clerk Dunbar presented to the Board the Battle of the Bands Special Event Application. Clerk Dunbar stated that this is a new event with the Canton Dreams and Memories group. Clerk Dunbar stated that the event is on June 26th-27th at Sorrells Street Park. Clerk Dunbar then stated that the group is asking to close Sorrells Street during the event.

Robin Black added that the event is free for the community and the bands will mostly play country music or southern rock.

Alderman Hamlett made a motion to approve the Battle of the Bands Special Event application. Alderman Shepard seconded the motion. All voted in favor of the motion and the motion carried.

5. Task Order Agreement for Professional Services: Bolton and Menk

Manager Stinnett presented the Board with a task order agreement for professional services with Bolton and Menk. Manager Stinnett stated that this is the first task order and it will not exceed \$50,000.

Alderwoman Mull made a motion to approve the task order agreement for professional services with Bolton and Menk. Alderman Shepard seconded the motion. All voted in favor of the motion and the motion carried.

6. Pigeon River Flood Risk Management Study

Manager Stinnett presented to the Board the Pigeon River Flood Risk Management Study agreement with Water Resources Development Act. Manager Stinnett reminded the Board that they have already approved this agreement, but this is an amendment that includes the Southwestern Commission and the Town of Clyde.

Alderman Shepard made a motion to approve the Pigeon River Flood Risk Management Study with the Water Resources Development Act. Alderwoman Mull seconded the motion. All voted in favor of the motion and the motion carried.

7. Updated Personal Policy

Manager Stinnett presented to the Board an updated Personal Policy regarding Holidays. Manager Stinnett stated that the language in the old policy needed to be corrected and the employees will still have the same Holiday Schedule.

Alderman Hamlett made a motion to approve the updated personal policy. Alderwoman Mull seconded the motion. Alderman Hamlett made a comment about employees getting off work early on New Years Day but getting off early on New Years Eve would be more appropriate. Alderman Hamlett continued stating that the Christmas schedule did not seem right either. Manager Stinnett agreed and believed these are typos. Manager Stinnett stated she would make the corrections. Alderman Hamlett withdrew his motion until the corrections were made.

8. Budget Amendment

Manager Stinnett presented the Board with a budget amendment for the maintenance and repair for a fire truck. Manager Stinnett stated that this would increase the Fire Department's Maintenance and repair line item to \$75,000.

Alderwoman Proctor made a motion to approve the budget amendment. Alderwoman Mull seconded the motion. All voted in favor of the motion and the motion carried.

9. Set Work Session Date and Time

Manager Stinnett then asked the Board to set time for the work session on February 4th at the Champion Credit Union building. Mayor Smathers asked how much time Manager Stinnett and Jeff Goss needed for the meeting. Manager Stinnett answered if we start at 9am, we should finish by 4 o'clock.

Alderwoman Mull made a motion to set the time for the work session at 9am on February 4th. Alderwoman proctor seconded the motion. All voted in favor of the motion and the motion carried.

10. A Resolution Calling for a Public Hearing on a Proposed Moratorium Ordinance Regulation Data Centers, Cryptocurrency Minning Facilities, and Server Farms

Manager Stinnett presented the Board with a resolution calling for a public hearing on a proposed moratorium ordinance regulating data centers, cryptocurrency mining facilities, and server farms. Manager Stinnett asked the Board to set a public hearing to discuss a data center in Town limits.

Mayor Smathers clarified that a moratorium freezes new applications for any of these facilities. Manager Stinnett answered that is correct. Manager Stinnett asked the Board if they would like to move the February 12th meeting and make a Special Called meeting and public hearing on February 11th.

Alderwoman Mull made a motion to set a Public Hearing on February 11th at 6p.m. Alderwoman Proctor seconded the motion. All voted in favor of the motion and the motion carried.

Representative Pless stated that he is not a fan of Moratoriums but supports the Board's decision on this issue. Representative Pless stated that this is a good opportunity for Canton to know its future.

Amended Tax Billing Statement

Manager Stinnett presented to the Board an amended Tax Billing Statement due to a clerical error. Alderwoman Mull made a motion to approve the amended Tax Billing Statement. Alderwoman Proctor seconded the motion. All voted in favor of the motion and the motion carried.

K. Closed Session: Pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11 (a) (3)(4)(5)

At 9:18 p.m. Alderwoman Mull made a motion to enter closed session pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11 (a) (3)(4)(5). Alderman Shepard seconded the motion, and all were in favor and the motion carried. At 9:54p.m. Alderwoman Proctor made a motion to enter open session and Aldermen Shepard seconded the motion all were in favor and the motion passed. No action was taken. Alderwoman Mull made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Alderwoman Proctor seconded the motion. All voted in favor of the motion and the motion carried.

L. Adjournment

The next Special Called meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 11, 2026, at 6:00p.m. at Town Hall located at 85 Summer Street, Canton, NC 28716. There being no additional business, Mayor Smathers adjourned the meeting at 9:54p.m.

Sam Dunbar, Town Clerk